

CALFEX 2006

Special Passengers, Special Flights

The Army in Space

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

July 2006  
[www.army.mil/soldiers](http://www.army.mil/soldiers)

# Soldiers

A close-up photograph of a young man, likely a soldier, performing a pull-up on a metal bar. He is wearing a brown t-shirt and a black digital watch on his left wrist. His face is contorted with effort, showing a grimace with his teeth bared. His hands are firmly gripping the bar, and his arms are tensed. The background is a clear blue sky.

**Best Ranger  
Competition**





**Cover** Story — Page 14  
Best Ranger contestant SPC  
Mikhail Venikov knocks out  
another pull-up during the  
competition.  
—Photo by David Dismukes

# CONTE

Soldiers | July 2006 | Vol





Page 24



Page 30

## Features

**Special Passengers, Special Flights** 8  
For the fixed-wing and helicopter aircrews of the Air Operations Group, every passenger is a VIP.

**Best Ranger Competition** 14  
Fort Benning, Ga., recently hosted 52 Soldiers, all vying to win top honors as the best Ranger in the Army. Only two made the grade.

**Winter Sports Clinic** 18  
An innovative program lets disabled veterans take part in a range of winter sports.

**The Army in Space** 24  
Two Soldiers — one retired, one active — ride rockets and reach for the stars.

**Singing Soldiers** 30  
We take a look at the history of the U.S. Army Chorus as it prepares to celebrate its 50th birthday.

**CALFEX 2006** 34  
A combined-arms live-fire exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., helps Soldiers prepare for duty in Iraq.

**Battle at Entry Control Point-5** 38  
Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers faced a tough fight when heavily armed Iraqi insurgents attacked U.S. positions in Ramadi.

**Life at Camp Corregidor** 41  
An austere forward operating base in one of Iraq's most dangerous towns is home to Pennsylvania Guard armor Soldiers.

**A Corregidor Reunion** 42  
A teacher and one of his former students, both National Guard Soldiers, meet up in Iraq.

## Departments

- 2 Mail Call
- 4 On Point
- 44 Legal Forum
- 46 Message Center
- 48 Focus on People



THE image on this month's front cover pretty much sums up what it takes to win the Best Ranger Competition — guts, determination and a whole lot of sweat. Beginning on page 14, Bridgett Siter and David Dismukes take us up close and personal with the competitors in this year's Best Ranger at Fort Benning, Ga., and introduce us to the Soldiers who had what it takes to win bragging rights as the best in their business.

And speaking of reaching the heights of your profession, check out Heike Hasenauer's story on current and former Soldiers who have joined the nation's astronaut corps. "The 'Army' in Space" begins on page 24.

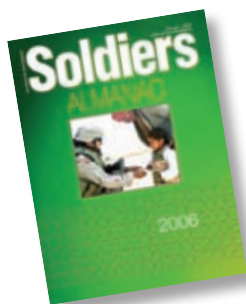
For a close-up view on some Army aviators who are a little more "down to earth," turn to "Special Passengers, Special Flights" opening on page 8. For the fixed-wing and helicopter pilots of the Military District of Washington's Air Operations Group, every passenger is a VIP.

This month we also take a look at the U.S. Army Chorus in Jennifer Maly's "Singing Soldiers," beginning on page 30. This is a particularly good time to visit with these talented vocalists and musicians, since next month marks the 50th anniversary of the group's creation.

And, finally, MSG Lisa Gregory brings us an inspiring story about physically challenged veterans who participated in the 20th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass, Colo. Check it out, beginning on page 18.



Steve Harding  
Managing Editor



**Soldiers magazine is distributed** based on unit commanders' requirements. Commanders and publications officers can order **Soldiers** through the Army Publishing Directorate at <http://docs.usapa.belvoir.army.mil/ordering/store.asp>.

To start or change your unit subscription, enter the **Initial Distribution Number (IDN) 050007**.



## Soldiers

### The Official U.S. Army Magazine

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**Soldiers** (ISSN 0093-8440) is published monthly by the Army Chief of Public Affairs to provide information on people, policies, operations, technical developments, trends and ideas of and about the Department of the Army. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

■ Send submissions and correspondence to Editor, **Soldiers**, 9325 Gunston Road, Suite S108, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581. Phone: DSN 656-4486 or commercial 703-806-4486, or send e-mail to [soldiers@belvoir.army.mil](mailto:soldiers@belvoir.army.mil).

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■ The Secretary of the Army has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business as required by law of the department. Funds for printing this publication were approved by the Secretary of the Army in accordance with the provisions of Army Regulation 25-30. Library of Congress call number: U1.A827.

■ Periodicals postage paid at Fort Belvoir, VA, and additional mailing offices.

■ Individual subscriptions: Subscriptions can be purchased through the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

■ **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to the Fort Belvoir address above.

## Soldiers

Recipient of Awards of Magazine Excellence



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NAGC Blue Pencil  
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Thomas Jefferson Awards  
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## Frontlines of Care

YOUR March issue focusing on the medical care provided to Soldiers wounded and injured in Afghanistan and Iraq was excellent.

I was especially moved by Andricka Hammonds' story on the Army Burn Center. I cannot imagine the pain burned Soldiers must endure, but the courage with which they face their ordeal came through in every quote.

Thanks for a great issue.

**SPC Nan Oberdorf**  
via e-mail

AS a disabled Vietnam veteran, I just had to tell you all how great your March issue was. It really points out the sacrifices our Soldiers and their families are making, and I'm glad to see that they are not being forgotten by the nation or the Army.

I just hope that all Americans remember the cost that Soldiers pay to protect us and our freedom.

**Jerry J. Polek**  
via e-mail

YOUR March issue was an eye-opener for me, and probably for a lot of other readers. While we may pay attention to the ongoing events in Iraq and Afghanistan, I don't think many of us realize the toll these conflicts are causing among our service members.

I'm glad to see that the Army is doing whatever it can to help our wounded. They deserve all the help we can give them.

**Marilou Bowen**  
via e-mail

## Woodpeckers Worth It?

I WAS glad to read in the April issue that the Army is taking such great care of the red-cockaded woodpecker.

I have to wonder, though, if our concern for a rather unimpressive-looking bird is outweighing our need to train Soldiers adequately for the ongoing war on terror. I've been involved in training events at Fort Bragg that had to be curtailed or even cancelled because a woodpecker suddenly showed up,

and I think that does huge harm, since the people whose training gets interrupted are the ones who have to go downrange.

How about a little common sense in our concern for wildlife on Army lands? The Soldiers' welfare should always come before the needs of plants or animals.

**Name Withheld by Request**  
via e-mail

## Not Shafter

WHILE I enjoyed the April article "America's Engineers in the Pacific," I have to point out an error.

The photo caption on page 26 talks about "modern and comfortable homes for families at Fort Shafter," and the picture itself shows a really nice set of quarters. Problem is, those quarters sure aren't on Fort Shafter. Anybody who's lived on post knows that Shafter's family housing needs a whole lot of work. Wherever that house is, sign me up!

**SFC M. Swanson**  
via e-mail

*WE'VE gotten several letters and e-mails pointing out this same error, for which we apologize. The quarters shown in the photo are actually at Schofield Barracks, not Fort Shafter. Sorry for the mix-up.*

## Pot Hunters in Hawaii

THE April article "Pot Hunting in Hawaii" was both interesting and informative. As both a retired National Guard Soldier and retired police officer, I'm glad to know that the Guard is continuing to help fight the war against illegal drugs.

To all Guard members helping to stop the flow of marijuana into and around the United States — thank you, and keep up the good work!

**William V. Smith**  
via e-mail

## Kudos to the Old Guard

YEARS ago I travelled to Arlington National Cemetery for the burial of my uncle, who'd served the nation bravely

in World War II. He was buried with full honors, and I'll never forget how beautiful and solemn and moving the ceremony was.

Your May article about the Old Guard really brought back those memories for me, and it also helped me learn that the Soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry do way more than I realized.

**Viveca Sanderston**  
via e-mail

## From Battlefield to Hospital

YOUR May article tracking a Soldier in Iraq from the time he was wounded through his recuperation in Germany was very well done.

It's great that Soldiers have a much better chance of surviving their wounds now than they did even a few years ago, but that doesn't mean the road to recovery is an easy one. I don't think most Americans, and probably not many Soldiers, like to think too much about what our wounded have to go through, and your article will be a real eye-opener for a lot of folks.

I also think the graphic images of surgery will help people better appreciate the sacrifices Soldiers are often called on to make. I'm guessing it took some editorial courage to run those shots, given that we so rarely see such images in official publications.

Thanks for the great effort, and I hope you continue to show all the realities of our Soldiers' lives.

**MAJ Paul Harrison**  
via e-mail

## Soldiers values your opinion

To comment, keep your remarks to under 150 words, include your name, rank and address and send them to:

Mail Call, Soldiers,  
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## Africa

CPT Maria Auer, a postal inspector with the 55th Postal Service Battalion, performs quality- control checks for incoming and outgoing mail at Camp LeMonier, Djibouti.

— Photo by SSgt Nic Raven, USAF



## ► Afghanistan

Curious villagers watch as CPT Jason Toole (right) and SPC Nick Cannole evaluate the results of a CAT scan of a man who suffered a stroke in the village of Makawa.

— Photo by SPC Christopher S. Barnhart



## ▲ Afghanistan

Afghans line up their sheep and goats for a dose of deworming medicine given out by CPL Latchie Reginald (left) and SGT Jared Cross from the 10th Mountain Division's Support Battalion during a village medical outreach visit to Khakeran, in Qalat Province.

— Photo by SPC Leslie Angulo





### ▲ Iraq

Soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, prepare to enter a house during a patrol in the Al Jazeera Desert.

— Photo by Staff Sgt Aaron Allmon, USAF

### ▶ El Salvador

SPC Kimberlin Devin of the Illinois Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment, fuels a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in preparation for a mission during Exercise New Horizons in El Salvador.

— Photo by SPC Cristhian Del Pino





*Army MDW Air Operations Group*

# Special **PASSENGER**





# S, Special FLIGHTS

Story by Steve Harding

SGT Jeremy Kern



ANY Army aviator will tell you that whoever is riding in the back of the aircraft is important. But for two groups of flyers in the Washington, D.C., area, the passengers are routinely VIPs.

The specialized organizations — the 12th Aviation Battalion at Fort Belvoir, Va., and the U.S. Army Priority Air Transport command at Andrews Air Force Base, Md. — are tasked with transporting senior Army and government leaders. The 12th Avn. Bn. accomplishes the mission using helicopters, while the USAPAT flies state-of-the-art executive jets.

Both units are part of the Air Operations Group, recently established within the Army's Military District of Washington and Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region to handle several aviation-specific tasks [see accompanying box on page 12]. And while the 12th Avn. and USAPAT bring identical levels of professionalism and dedication to the mission, each approaches that mission in a distinct way.

## Black Hawks on Call

Operating from Davison Army Airfield near Fort Belvoir, the 12th Avn. Bn. uses Black Hawk helicopters to fly two types of missions, said its

▶ A VH-60 executive-transport helicopter of the Fort Belvoir, Va.-based 12th Aviation Battalion passes the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.



Steve Harding (both this page)



▲ Crewmembers install the special seat cushions used in a standard Black Hawk that has been assigned a VIP-transport mission.

commander, LTC William Crozier.

“First, we provide VIP transport within an area of operations that extends from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in the north, to Carlisle Barracks, Pa., in the west, to Fort Monroe, Va., in the south,” he said. “And second, we support contingency missions when directed by the MDW or JFHQ-NCR.”

Those missions, said MDW/JFHQ-NCR commander MG Guy C. Swan III, could include such things as “transporting Soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) on ceremonial duties, and aiding in the emergency evacuation of senior leaders from the capital during natural disasters or times of international crisis.”

The battalion comprises a headquarters company, two aircraft companies, an aviation-maintenance company, a civilian-manned airfield-operations unit — Davison Airfield Management — and, unusually for an organization of its type, a rescue engineer company.

Companies A and C operate two Black Hawk variants. Four heavily modified VH-60s feature enhanced avionics, plush executive interiors and special exterior paint schemes, and are

▲ A 12th Avn. Bn. UH-60 prepares for a mission from Davison Army Airfield. The standard Black Hawks perform both VIP and contingency missions.

used exclusively for transporting VIPs. The unit’s 14 standard UH-60s are also used for VIP work, as well as for the special contingency missions.



The 12th’s Co. D undertakes routine maintenance of all of the unit’s aircraft, while Davison Airfield Management operates and maintains Davison Army Airfield and the Pentagon heliport. The engineer company is a specialized technical-rescue organization intended to respond to emergencies within the NCR (and will be the subject of an in-depth article in an upcoming issue of Soldiers).

## Challenging Airspace

While regulations covering the use of government-provided air transportation mean that most of the 12th Avn. Bn.’s VIP flights cover at least 100 miles, at some point each flight transits the NCR. And flying over the nation’s capital can be a very challenging experience, Crozier said.

“The Washington, D.C., region is designated by the Federal Aviation Administration as ‘Class B’ airspace,





meaning it's one of the busiest and most crowded," he said. The fairly limited airspace is home to three major international airports and several smaller general-aviation fields, and the skies over the nation's capital are routinely crowded with dozens of helicopters carrying out military missions, state and federal law-enforcement tasks, evacuating injured motorists or gathering news.

"Because it's so crowded, you always have to know exactly where you are, and you always have to be where you're supposed to be," said CW2 Michael Hall, the 12th's tactical-operations officer. "This region has a very well-defined route structure, and there's no uncertainty about where the prohibited areas are. If pilots — military or civilian — lose focus or stray from where they're supposed to be, major problems can develop very, very quickly."

And a mid-air collision is not the only danger lurking in the capital region's tightly regulated skies, Crozier said. Pilots who don't follow all the rules are subject to interception by Air Force or U.S. Customs Service aircraft. In the worst-case scenario, suspect aircraft could be fired upon by one of the Army surface-to-air missile launchers sited around the region.

"Because of the challenging operating conditions, and because we're responsible for the safety of such people as the secretary of the Army and the chief of staff, we have very high standards for all of our pilots and crew chiefs," said CW4 James Marvinn, the battalion's standardization officer. "The Army and the people we carry put a lot of trust in us, and we do everything we can to deserve it."

## Global Wings

When senior leaders need to travel farther than a Black Hawk can carry

► The executive jets assigned to USAPAT are fitted with state-of-the-art flight, navigation and communication systems, and fly missions worldwide.

them — such as to the other side of the globe — they turn to the USAPAT and its jets.

"Our mission is to provide safe, secure and reliable executive air transportation anywhere in the world," said MAJ Dennis E. Griffin, the organization's commander. "Our services are available to the secretary and under-secretary of the Army, the chief and vice chief of staff of the Army, and any other users who may be designated by the secretary of the Army."

While USAPAT is headquartered at Andrews AFB, it has two additional flight detachments — one at Hickham AFB, Hawaii, to support U.S. Army, Pacific, and a second at Ramstein Air

Base, Germany, to support U.S. Army, Europe.

USAPAT employs several types of executive jet aircraft. Those at Andrews AFB include two long-range Gulfstream Aerospace C-37As, a more advanced C-37B and three smaller Cessna UC-35Bs. The Ramstein detachment operates a Gulfstream C-20E, while the Hawaii detachment has a slightly larger C-20F.

The C-37s and C-20s are used for long-range, intercontinental missions, Griffin said, while the UC-35s operate mainly within North and Central America. The C-20s and C-37s can carry 11 or 12 passengers, and the UC-35 can seat seven.

Steve Harding





Steve Harding

## Hand-picked Crews

While the range and capacity of USAPAT's aircraft are important, it's the quality of the crews that allows the organization to provide outstanding service, Griffin said.

"Our pilots are all senior Army fixed-wing aviators, chief warrant of-

✦ USAPAT's C-37 executive transports boast small but complete galleys, which the flight stewards use to prepare food ranging from snacks to full dinners.

ficer 3 and above, who have gone through a specialized selection process," he said. "They have an average of about 4,000 fixed-wing flight hours and extensive worldwide flying experience. Our flight engineers are equally capable and, since we have the opportunity to hand select aviators and NCOs, we get the cream of the crop."

The UC-35s are normally crewed by two pilots, while the C-37s have a five-person crew — two pilots, a flight engineer and two flight stewards. On many flights a communications specialist is provided by the passen-

ger's organization. On flights into less-secure areas the aircraft carries several specially trained military-police Soldiers, referred to as "ravens," who guard the aircraft while it is on the ground.

"While every member of each aircrew is important to the mission, I often say that our flight stewards are the 'face' of USAPAT as far as our passengers are concerned, because it's the stewards who most often interact with the people in the passenger compartment," Griffin said.

Since their primary mission is to ensure the safety of the passengers, the stewards go through extensive cabin-attendant, safety and medical training to enable them to deal with potential in-flight emergencies, said CW5 Terry Myers, USAPAT's operations officer.

"And, since our stewards also prepare in-flight meals, we hand-pick them from among the Army's best food-service Soldiers," he said. "The



## Aviation Oversight in the NCR

The Air Operations Group — parent organization of both the 12th Aviation Battalion and the U.S. Army Priority Air Transport command — was established in December 2005 to fulfill a very specific task, according to MG Guy C. Swan III, commander of both the Military District of Washington and the Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region.

"The JFHQ-NCR is charged with coordinating all services within the NCR for homeland defense and support to civil authorities," he said, "and the AOG — in addition to being the higher headquarters for both the 12th Avn. Bn. and the USAPAT — is also the joint military aviation expert organization in the NCR."

Coordination of all military aviation assets in the NCR is vitally important, Swan

said, because the services would integrate their air operations during a time of national emergency or natural disaster.

"In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina we saw helicopters from all the services and a variety of law-enforcement and civilian agencies at work saving lives and moving people and cargo," he said. "If something catastrophic were to happen in the NCR, helicopters would be just as important to rescue-and-recovery efforts. So planning for an integrated aviation response is absolutely vital. The AOG is not the lead agency by any means, but we feel we can offer a valuable service to our civil and military counterparts to create a true community of aviators here in the NCR."

Part of the AOG's planning involves determining which military installations in the NCR have airfields or landing areas capable of supporting helicopter operations in the event of a large-scale incident, said the AOG's commander, COL Steward E. Remaly.

"We feel that such planning will help us better execute our joint-services, support-to-civil-authority mission here in the NCR in the event of a man-made incident or natural disaster," he said.

"This organization is unique, in that it doesn't fit any of the Army's current aviation organization structures," Remaly said. "Our missions are out of the ordinary, so we had to essentially invent the organization from scratch."

Fortunately, Remaly said, the AOG has been able to depend on skilled and capable personnel at all levels.

"I couldn't ask for better Soldiers and civilians," he said. "Everyone — in the AOG, in the 12th Avn. Bn. and in USAPAT — is a true professional. We're tasked with missions that are not performed anywhere else in the Army, and I'm proud to say that every member of this team is dedicated to ensuring that we accomplish the missions to the highest possible level." — Steve Harding





stewards have to be able to prepare anything from a simple sandwich to a five-course meal, all of it in the aircraft's small galley."

## Mission Planning

Planning for each USAPAT flight is undertaken by the organization's 11-person operations cell, Myers said.

"When an authorized user's travel office contacts us, we start doing all the necessary coordination regarding destination, itinerary and departure date," he said. For missions within the United States the planning is fairly straightforward, but overseas travel can be much more involved.

"If the Army chief of staff needs to travel to Iraq or Afghanistan, for example, that can require nine or 10 country clearances," Myers said. "Plus we have to arrange for crew billeting, rental cars if necessary and, most importantly, the food, water and ice necessary for the whole period of the trip."

On the day of the flight the pilots

get a packet that includes the completed flight plan, the routing, all the computations for the fuel load and the information on the various airfields, he said. All the pilots have to do is verify the information, in the same way that airline pilots do with their dispatchers.

"We follow all the normal routing and air-traffic control procedures, and we file flight plans just like those that have to be filed for any other passenger-carrying aircraft," Griffin said. "The only difference is that we can operate into military facilities that are closed to civilian aircraft. While we prefer to fly into military air bases whenever possible, for security reasons, we will fly into whichever facility best accommodates the user's mission."


## Satisfied Customers

The end result of all USAPAT's efforts, Griffin said, is a flight that gets the passengers to their destination quickly and safely.

"The people we transport are doing important work on behalf of the Army and the nation, and we do everything we can to support them by providing the best-possible flight experience," he said.

"And we do just that," Myers added. "In fiscal year 2005 our Andrews-based aircraft carried 1,646 passengers, flying 853,478 nautical miles over the course of 2,878 flight hours, all without an incident or accident."

The ultimate validation of USAPAT's efforts comes from its customers, said instructor pilot CW3 Kris Rogers.

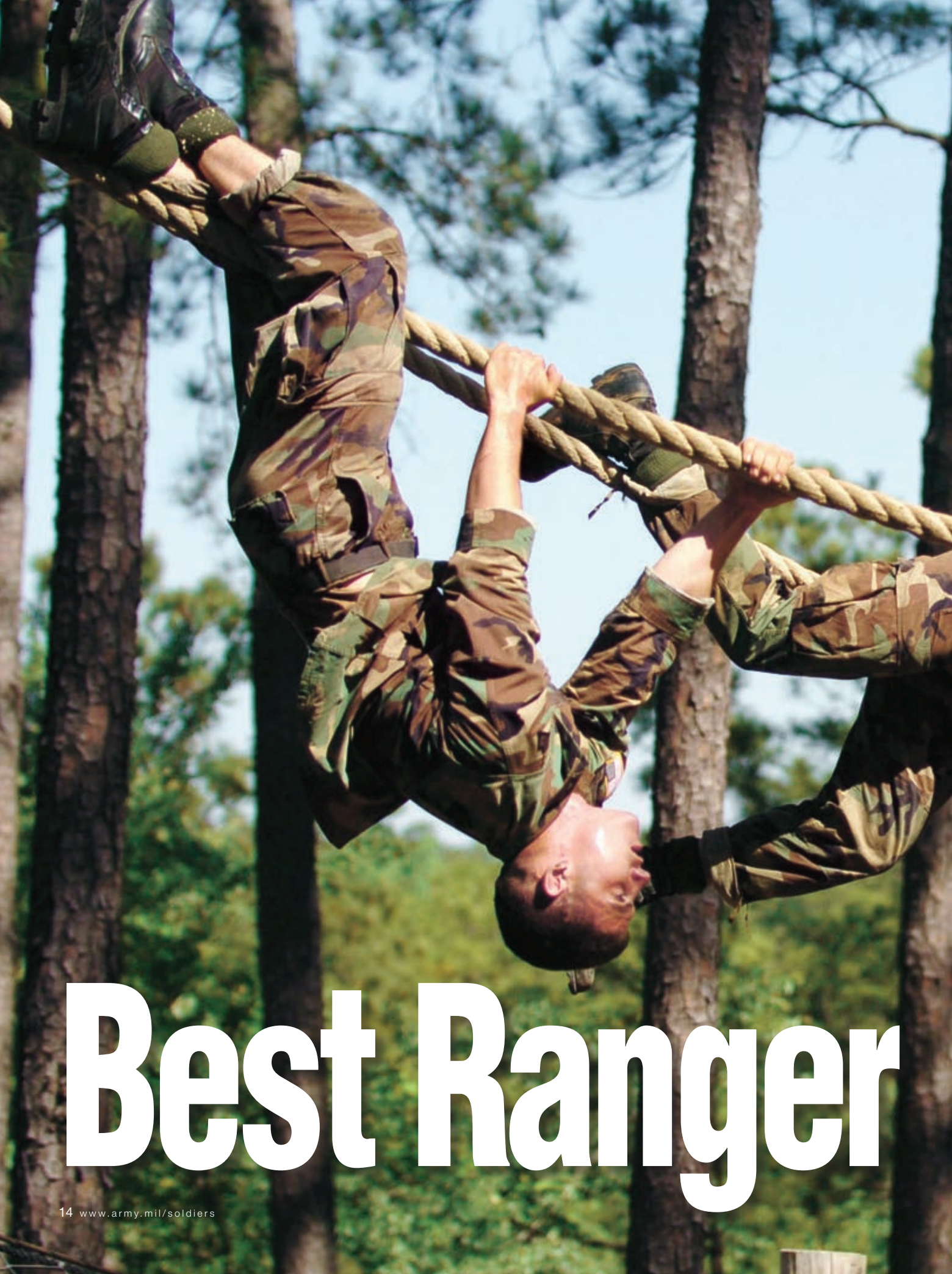
"We always strive to exceed our customers' expectations, whether it's in getting them where they need to go in a timely manner or reacting quickly to their changing needs," he said. "And once people fly with us, they usually don't want to fly with anyone else." 

▼ USAPAT's jets give senior Army and government leaders safe, secure and reliable executive air transportation anywhere in the world.

Gulfstream Aerospace Corp.








# Best Ranger





**L**TC Joe Rippetoe (Ret.) remembers what it was like to navigate the dense jungles of Vietnam in the dead of night, with only an occasional, faint glimpse of mountains to help maintain his bearings.

Recently, he watched as 52 rangers put their orienteering and other skills to the test at the 23rd annual LTG David E. Grange Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Ga.

“Our enemy was the surprises we found out there in the jungle. Their enemy is time and fatigue,” said Rippetoe, who has attended the competition for the past few years to present a bronze boot to the first team that completes the march. The gesture is dedicated to the memory of his son, CPT Russell Rippetoe, a ranger who was killed in Iraq in April 2003.

Rippetoe watched from the stands as 15 teams that made it past the rigorous, night-long orienteering event tackled the water-confidence course at Victory Pond. Sitting two rows behind him was 1LT Jimmy Ryan, who placed 16th in the competition in 2001. Like Rippetoe, Ryan recognized the relevance of the events that comprise the competition, including the roughly 20-mile march, a “spot” jump onto Lee Field, the Day Stakes and Prusik Climb at Todd Field, and the Ranger Training Brigade’s fearsome twosome — the Malvesti and the Darby Queen obstacle courses.

Bridgett Siter and David Dismukes work in the Fort Benning, Ga., Public Affairs Office.

# Competition

Story by Bridgett Siter Photos by David Dismukes

Soldiers • July 2006 15





“From a physical standpoint, Best Ranger was the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” said Ryan, who spent a year in Iraq with the 3rd Brigade after several years as the 4th Ranger Training Battalion Dive Team supervisor.

“There was never a situation in Iraq when I felt as bad — as exhausted — as I did during the competition. But certainly I was stressed all the time in Iraq, and mentally, the competition prepared me for that,” he said.

Besides the stress, the events Ryan found most relevant from the perspective of a combat veteran were not the “great separators” — the march and orienteering.

“It’s the technical stuff — the weapons familiarization, marksmanship, communications, using the laser range

finder, that kind of thing,” he said.

“It’s one thing to be physically fit, but you’ve got to be able to handle your weapon or keep your head in the middle of combat when you’re communicating with three elements at one time. After this competition, Soldiers who competed will go into combat confident they can handle that,” Ryan added.

Good information for the spectators, but for the 42 competitors who’ve already seen combat, the point is moot. In fact, with an average of eight years in service, most have deployed in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

It takes “talent, toughness and a call to duty” to step up to the challenge of combat and the Best Ranger competition, said GEN Richard A. Cody, the Army’s vice chief of staff, who greeted the winners at an awards ceremony at the Ranger Memorial at Fort Benning.

“You’ve accomplished what to others would seem impossible,” he

said. “You are never satisfied with good enough.”

Cody might have been speaking directly to SFC John Sheaffer, who, along with his teammate SPC Mikhail Venikov, won bragging rights as best of the best for the next year.

Sheaffer was one of the two winners of the second-place team in 2004, with SFC Matthew Wilson. That, apparently, wasn’t good enough; the two planned to compete this year again and were tagged early on as potential winners.

Wilson suffered a back injury that prevented him from competing. So Sheaffer was partnered with

Venikov, who came to the States from Russia with his family when he was seven. The two represented the 75th Ranger Regiment.

Unlike the majority of teams that trained for weeks, even months, Sheaf-



For additional coverage on the 2006 Best Ranger Competition, visit [www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil) and keyword search “Best Ranger.”

▼ SPC Mikhail Venikov does push-ups in tune with a metronome. Venikov and his partner, SFC John Sheaffer, went on to win the competition.





► SFC John Sheaffer of the 75th Ranger Regiment reaches for another bar during the Darby Queen event. He was on a second-place team in 2004.

fer and Venikov had little time to train together.

Venikov came out strong in the opening events of the competition and captured the pugil championship, putting him and Sheaffer in the early lead. "I'm feeling good," Venikov said. "Winning this competition would be the greatest accomplishment of my life."

Venikov and Sheaffer increased the point spread after winning a night road march, and they never let go of their lead. The only knuckle-biter was the race for second and third place. Going into Day Stakes, it looked like the only team with two experienced competitors, 2LT John Agnew and 2LT Donovan Duke, both of the Infantry Officer Basic Course, would come in second, followed by CPT Wesley Davidson and CPT Joshua Eaton, of the Infantry Captains Career Course.

SSG Jeremiah Pittman and SFC Brandon Young, also of the 75th Ranger Regt., were in fifth place at that point. A strong show in Day Stakes and orienteering brought them up to second place by day three of the competition, bumping Davidson and Eaton to third place. Duke and Agnew were then in fifth place, and that's



where they ended the competition.

By the time the teams navigated the Darby Queen and Water-Confidence Course, Pittman and Young had again flipped places with Davidson and Eaton. And that's where they stayed.

The top winners were as follows: first place, Venikov and Sheaffer;

second, Davidson and Eaton; third, Pittman and Young; fourth, SFC Steven Viands and SFC Travis May, 4th Ranger Training Bn.; and fifth, Agnew and Duke. 🚩



▲ Venikov crawls under barbed wire on the Darby Queen during the final day of competition. The obstacles proved challenging for many of the competitors.



► CPT Joshua Eaton (*foreground*) and his partner CPT Wesley Davidson negotiate the Worm obstacle on the Darby Queen during the final day of the competition. They ultimately took second place.



National Disabled Veterans

# Winter Sports Clinic

Story by MSG Lisa Gregory

Disabled veterans from around the country gathered in Snowmass, Colo., to participate in what organizers called “a solid form of therapy and rehabilitation for the men and women who need it most.”

THEY come from all across the country for one purpose, to ascend to the top of the mountain and make their way down, however possible. For the nearly 400 disabled veterans who attended the 20th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass, Colo., in April, coming down was worth the trip up.

From the time they get fitted with their skis or sleds and get a quick practice session with the instructor and then head for the ski lift, every veteran, regardless of their disability, is nervous, tense and scared. As they come skiing down the mountainside onlookers can see that all feelings of apprehension have disappeared.

Many of the veterans who attended

this year’s event had been to the clinic before. Clinton Hale, for example, participated in the first clinic held in 1987 at Powderhorn Mountain, Colo. Some veterans made their inaugural visit to the clinic and a few, like SPC Brian Anderson, of the 411th Military Police Company and currently recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C, made their first trip out since being injured in late 2005 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Anderson, a triple amputee, credits his friend Joseph Bozik, also a triple amputee, with convincing him to make the trip. “He was injured before me and is further along in his therapy than I am. He’s been a huge help and a mentor for me through my therapy,” added Anderson.





▲ SFC Dana Bowman (Ret.) an amputee and former Army Black Knight, parachutes onto Snowmass Mountain during the opening ceremony.

▶ The Snowmass ski area hosted disabled veterans from around the country, and offered skiing, sledding and a range of other winter sports.



MSG Lisa Gregory (above) Main photo courtesy Dept. of Veterans Affairs





Courtesy VA

▶ Participants gather in the staging area in preparation for the trip to the top of Snowmass Mountain.

▶ Volunteer instructors and guides help SPC Brian Anderson adjust to a mono ski before his first downhill run.

"I really just wanted to come out and have fun, and I've been here two days and I've done just that. I went shooting and climbed the rock wall. This has been a great experience. Now I'm going to ski for the first time ever," said Anderson.

As instructors fitted him with a mono ski for his trip down the mountain, Anderson said that participating in the clinic was going to be yet another experience to grow on. "I feel anything I do from here on out is just going to help make me stronger."

During his first practice run Anderson said he felt great. After coming down from the top of the mountain he exclaimed "That was awesome."

For Sandy Trombetta, founder and director of the clinic, those words are music to his ears. "This clinic has proven to be a solid form of therapy and rehabilitation for the men and women who need it most, and as long as we have people willing to give of themselves we'll continue doing it. This is about restoring self-confidence to those who may have lost it due to their injuries."

Although most of the events at this clinic are snow-sports related, Trombetta said the idea isn't to build better athletes. "We want the participants to take the skills they acquire here and adapt them to their daily lives. We're building confidence and making great people, not great skiers."

Clinic volunteers encourage participants to get out and enjoy the activities as a form of rehabilitation, no matter how nervous they are.

"This is my third year participating. The first time I tried skiing I found it really difficult," said Alan Lewis, an OIF veteran who lost his

▶ Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran Kenny Adams, who was blinded in an accident, tries his hand at golf with a little help from his wife, Katie.



MSG Lisa Gregory

legs to an improvised explosive device. "Once I tried snowboarding, I was hooked. It's important to get up and get out. You can't dwell on your disability, especially when you're used to being active all the time."

As the program began to grow in the early 1990s, the Department of Veterans Affairs began to co-sponsor the clinic with the Disabled American Veterans and included corporate sponsors to help participants get to the event. Paul Jackson, the DAV national commander, has been a volunteer with the event for 12 years.

"It's hard to explain what happens here to someone who has never experienced it," said Jackson. "For the guys and gals who come out here, feeling comfortable in this type of group is key. First, everyone here has been in the military, and they can relate to



MSG Lisa Gregory





▲ Veteran David Nau makes his way down the ski slope with a little assistance from a volunteer guide.



that. Then the commonality for them is their disability. Now they have two things that bond them together.”

When it comes to confidence-building Jackson said some people may never understand exactly what takes place during the clinic. “Not only do the veterans build their own confidence by participating in the events, but imagine the trust and bond that forms in a week between a severely disabled veteran and a total stranger who’s going to take him or her up a mountain. The trust they place in the guides and instructors over a few days is truly amazing.”

The trust-building process was a key factor for former PFC Kenny Adams, who was blinded during Operation Iraqi Freedom. “I was very nervous about skiing. I didn’t think it was possible after losing my eyesight, but I did it,” said Adams. “That was

probably the most challenging thing I’ve done since my accident.”

Although skiing is the main event for many of the attendees, other activities include rock-wall climbing, sled hockey, goal ball, snowmobiling, and even working on golf strategies.

“I enjoyed goal ball and hope to get people back home to play. It’s a paralympic sport, so I may try to get involved with that too,” said Adams.

“This is my first year here, but I did get to go to “Ski Spectacular” at Breckenridge and to the Telluride Adaptive Sports Program,” said SGT Carla Best, who is still recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in Washington D.C., after losing her leg during OIF. “I really enjoyed all of the other alternate events they have at this clinic, and being able to talk with the other veterans has been great.

“Skiing has been the most freeing

► The event’s oldest participant, World War II veteran Chester Golembiewski, poses with actress Bo Derrick (second from left) and members of the event staff after a medal presentation.

experience for me,” said Best. “And the speed flying down the hill only adds to the pleasure. The coaches here have more faith in you than you have in yourself. For them there are no excuses. I’m even considering moving out here when I get out of the Army.”

The impact of the clinic on the veterans is best expressed by those who have been participating for several years and know the long road ahead for those suffering injuries today.

“This is my seventh year at the clinic and I know this is something I would never do on my own,” said Army veteran David Nau. “The Winter Sports Clinic is proving to me that life doesn’t end with an injury.” 🚩

Courtesy VA



▼ Participants were also able to engage in such alternate activities as assisted scuba-diving lessons in the Snowmass pool.





## VA Transition Assistance

**S**OLDIERS transitioning out of the military are given a checklist of tasks to complete before they're handed their discharge papers.

One government agency has stepped up to assist Soldiers with this transition process and allow them to leave the military with a clearer understanding of their benefits.

"As a department we are extremely lucky to have one mission — to take care of America's veterans and their families," said Gordon H. Mansfield, the deputy secretary for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"We did a pilot transition program with the New Hampshire National Guard, during which we brought VA representatives on site for briefings and signed some service members up for benefits," Mansfield said.

The program, designed for Soldiers returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom, consists of a series of workshops and counseling sessions to provide Soldiers a seamless transition from the military to civilian life.

"We've begun sending folks from our benefits department out to meet with Reservists during their drills," said Mansfield. "We even have people working inside the medical-treatment facilities to answer questions for Soldiers as they're going through the transition process. We're finding that if we're out there with the information, more and more people will take advantage of the benefits we want to make sure they get when

they move into the civilian world."

One such benefit is the Vocational Rehabilitation program, which assists veterans with their educational needs for retraining for a new career field.

"We're focusing on getting more and more people back into the workforce. Right now, two thirds of veterans who used the program are back at work," said Mansfield. "The program is working. We're also refocusing other programs that help veterans own their own business."

One program that active-duty Soldiers may soon see as they begin transitioning from the military is the Benefits Delivery at Discharge program. It allows those planning to file VA disability claims to begin their medical out-processing at a local VA facility to help ensure their benefits are in place the day they are discharged from the military.

Benefits for those returning from operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom include Readjustment Counseling Services through the Vet Center and eligibility for VA medical services up to two years after returning home, as well as a host of transition services.

"We recognize that America, from the start, has always valued its veterans. We at the VA want to make sure that whatever benefits these service members deserve, they get," said Mansfield. "We have to make sure we carry out that commitment. It's a sizable job, but we're up for it." — *MSG Lisa M. Gregory*



For more information on services for Soldiers, visit [www.seamlesstransition.va.gov](http://www.seamlesstransition.va.gov)





- ▲ COL William S. McArthur Jr. (Ret.), Expedition 12 commander and NASA Space Station science officer, prepares for a test session at Johnson Space Center.
- ▶ The International Space Station was briefly home to both McArthur and COL Jeffrey Williams, who is Expedition 13 space station science officer and flight engineer.

# The “Army” in

Story by Heike Hasenauer Photos Courtesy of NASA





# n Space

“THE Army in space” was never a more apt phrase than in March, when NASA astronauts COL William McArthur Jr. (Ret.) and COL Jeffrey

Williams, members of International Space Station expeditions 12 and 13, respectively, inhabited the station — albeit for about a week at the same time.

When Williams blasted into space March 29 aboard a Russian Soyuz rocket from Baikonur, Kazakhstan, McArthur had been on the ISS since October 2005.

The replacement crew reached the ISS on March 31 and had about a week to learn what they could from the departing crew, including McArthur, Expedition 12’s commander.

Williams, a NASA science officer and flight engineer for Expedition 13, will also pull a six-month stint onboard the station, together with Mission Commander Pavel Vinogradov of the Russian Federal Space Agency and German astronaut Thomas Reiter of the European Space Agency.





Williams will “focus on station-assembly preparations for the ISS, which is about 50-percent complete, and maintenance and science in microgravity,” he said.

Many of the experiments are intended to gain information about the physical effects of long-duration spaceflight, which will help scientists better prepare future astronauts for missions to the moon or Mars, NASA officials said.

Williams is also scheduled to perform one of three space walks on this mission, which will collectively prepare the station’s exterior for additions.

“It is important that we dedicate time and effort to understanding the impacts of a weightless environment on the human body, because the space station’s primary purpose is to send crews back to the moon for a long duration and then on to Mars,” Williams said in a preflight interview with NASA.

As a mission specialist aboard the Space Shuttle *Atlantis* — a 10-day space-station assembly mission in



May 2000 — Williams performed a space walk that lasted almost seven hours.

Before the official hand-over of ISS responsibilities from the Expe-

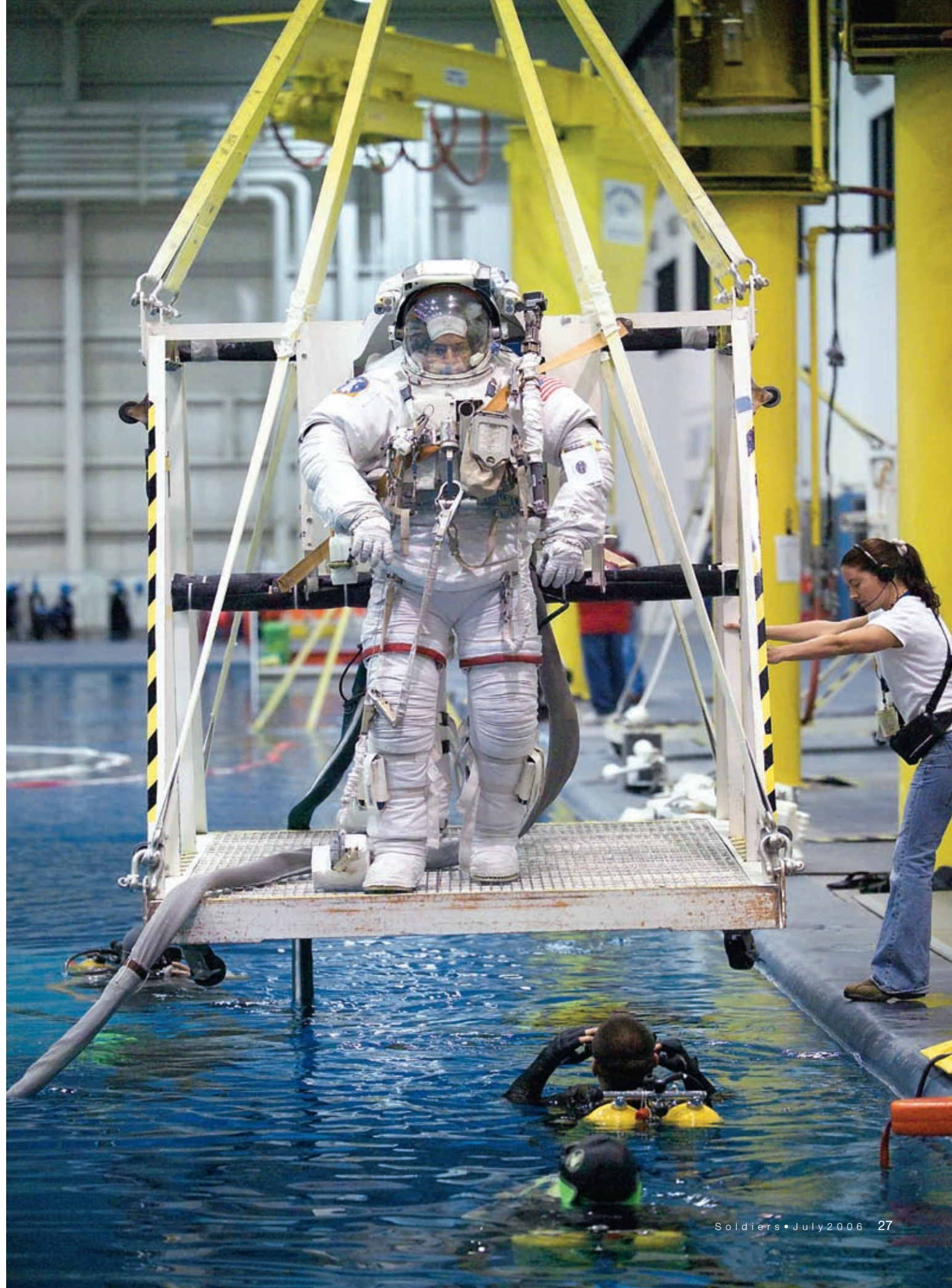
▲ Williams dons a training version of the Extravehicular Mobility Unit before being submerged in the waters of the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory near Johnson Space Center.

▶ McArthur floats through a hatch on the International Space Station. He retired from the Army in 2001, and participated in three space shuttle flights before leading ISS Expedition 12.

▶ Technicians at the Neutral Buoyancy Lab prepare to submerge McArthur in a pool in order to prepare him for the conditions he would encounter while working on the ISS’s exterior.

dition 12 crew, which left the space station after about a week’s overlap with Expedition 13’s crew, Williams and McArthur spoke to Army Chief of Staff GEN Peter Schoomaker via live









For more information about the Army in space visit [www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil) and keyword search "Army astronaut."

broadcast from the ISS as it passed over the tip of South America.

"The biggest thing we're doing is trying to demonstrate that people can live and work in space, in an environ-

ment that is innately hostile to human beings," McArthur said. "At the same time, we're gathering information that will enable even more effective support for longer durations of space flight."

McArthur celebrated a NASA milestone in space in December 2005, the date that marked the fifth consecutive year that the station was inhabited by humans. He and his crew received thousands of e-mail "postcards" from well-wishers around the world.

McArthur, who retired from the

Army in 2001, participated in three previous space flights, aboard shuttles *Columbia*, *Atlantis* and *Discovery* in 1993, 1995 and 2000, respectively.

During the 1993 mission, McArthur and his crew performed numerous medical experiments on themselves and 48 rats, NASA officials said, to expand the knowledge of human and animal physiology, both on earth and in space.

He and his crew also contacted school children and amateur radio operators around the world, via the





- ▲ This artist's rendering depicts the ISS as it appears after the Expedition 12 mission. This image depicts the ISS from the port side, with the Russian Soyuz 11 spacecraft undocking.
- ▶ The Soyuz TMA-8 spacecraft and its booster were rolled to the launching pad at Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on March 28. The mission lifted off the following day.
- ▶ Expedition 13 commander Pavel V. Vinogradov and Williams pose for their official crew portrait.



Shuttle Amateur Radio experiment.

The 1995 mission included a rendezvous and docking with the Russian Space Station Mir, to attach a permanent docking module and deliver one and a half tons of supplies, NASA officials reported.

McArthur's last shuttle mission allowed him and his crew to perform four space walks to attach parts to the ISS using *Discovery's* robotic arm. That expansion of the ISS prepared the station for its first resident crew.


"We have a great deal of pride

and respect for you and your accomplishments," Schoomaker told the astronauts. "Thanks so much for your service. We wish you a safe time, an enjoyable time and great success on your mission."

"More than 400 human beings have ventured into space," NASA officials said. "Now, aboard the International Space Station, astronauts are working to improve life on earth and extend life beyond our home planet."

Astronauts selected for an ISS expedition mission undergo about 13

months of intensive mission-specific training at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas; at Kennedy Space Center in Florida; at the Canadian Space Agency's headquarters in Saint-Hubert, Quebec; and the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center at Star City, near Moscow, said NASA spokeswoman Nicole Cloutier-Lemasters.

The U.S. Space and Missile Defense Command manages the Army's astronaut program at the NASA Astronaut Detachment at Johnson Space Center. 





# Singing Soldiers

Story by Jennifer Maly

Jennifer Maly is the director of marketing for the U.S. Army Band at Fort Myer, Va.

30 [www.army.mil/soldiers](http://www.army.mil/soldiers)

**F**OR the last 50 years the U.S. Army Chorus, a component of the U.S. Army Band “Pershing’s Own,” has been America’s vocal ambassador to the world — from singing for private dinners with foreign

high-ranking military officials, to state dinners at the White House, and community concerts in churches and concert halls across the country.

The U.S. Army Chorus was founded with this mission in mind and has provided our nation’s leaders with





▶ The U.S. Army Chorus performs at many public functions, including the 2006 opening day ceremony of the Washington Nationals at RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C.

ship that not only plays well, but also sings well.” The demand for the group was so great that designated singers needed to be selected to perform the missions for which The Army Band Chorus had been tasked. So, on Aug. 14, 1956, Secretary of the Army Wilbur Brucker established the U.S. Army Chorus with 40 singers, plus pianists.

Today, the authorized size of the U.S. Army Chorus is 28 singers and two pianists, and the group’s performing schedule has never been busier. One of eight official elements of The U.S. Army Band “Pershing’s Own,” the Army Chorus’ current roster is no longer made up of volunteer bandmen who could carry a tune.

The chorus singers and pianists are selected by a rigorous audition process, and represent many of our nation’s finest music schools and conservatories. Once selected for the group, all members of the Army Chorus must successfully complete Basic Combat Training. Most members hold graduate degrees in music, and four of the current men of the chorus, including both pianists, have doctorates.

Since its inception, the U.S. Army Chorus has established and maintained a reputation of excellence in the performance of male choral music. Beyond traditional military music and patriotic standards, the ensemble’s repertoire covers a broad spectrum of such musical styles as spirituals, Broadway, folk and classical.

The U.S. Army Chorus is among the few professional male choruses in the world, and is the only remaining one in the military service bands of the United States.

“We constantly hear from the Army’s senior leaders about how important our music performances are to the morale of our Soldiers and the public alike,” said SGM Robert Petillo, a tenor in the chorus since 1986. “It has been my privilege to entertain

## *Communicating in a language we all understand — Music*

a powerful asset in dealing with their foreign counterparts through the one language we all understand — music. Music has the power to celebrate great joy and to comfort in times of great loss. It can bridge gaps in philosophies, cultures and political leanings.

In 1946 Army Band commander LTC Hugh Curry and CPT Samuel R. Loboda formed the U.S. Army Band Chorus — a volunteer group of “Pershing’s Own” instrumentalists who could sing — to fulfill Curry’s wish for “a band with plenty of showman-





the battlefield forces — before they left for Iraq — and to work with our personnel who entertained the troops in today's military theater.”

Soloists from the chorus have entertained troops overseas alongside USO performers during operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and during current U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Army Chorus entertains frequently at military ceremonies and events of state at the U.S. Capitol, the Pentagon and in the quarters of senior military leaders — notably for the visits of overseas officials. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff GEN

Richard Myers has called the Army Chorus “a strategic asset” in building international understanding.

The Chorus has sung in over 26 foreign languages and can do so on short notice.

This unique group of singing Soldiers has made hundreds of appearances at the White House and has performed for every U.S. president since Dwight D. Eisenhower. Missions for the commander-in-chief have been some of the most memorable moments for many members of the group — both retired and active duty.

The Army Chorus has performed at the library dedications of presidents

Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush; at the state funeral of President Lyndon Johnson; and at the internment service for Reagan.

Army Chorus alumnus SGM Mike Malovic (Ret.) recounted one of the many evening events performed for then-Vice President and Mrs. George H.W. Bush at the vice president's residence. “After dinner, when it was time for The Army Chorus to perform, the din of discussion was so loud that Mrs. Bush got up from her seat and asked the crowd to quiet down so that they could hear The Army Chorus sing.”

The Army Chorus and soloists from the group became endeared to the Bush family during their stay at the Naval Observatory and into their days at the White House. Current bass vocalist SSG Alvy Powell was asked to perform the national anthem for the senior President Bush's presidential inauguration in 1989, and in 2001 SFC Alec Maly, a bass in the chorus since 1995, performed a patriotic medley and the national anthem at President George W. Bush's first inauguration.

Many members of the Army Chorus have led distinguished careers on Broadway and on the stages of opera houses and concert halls worldwide. The list includes George Shirley, the first African-American member of the Army Chorus, who went on to become an international opera star. And Harrah's Las Vegas Casino and Hotel's current headline entertainer and former Atlantic City “Entertainer of the Year,” Clint Holmes, was a member of the Army Chorus from 1967 to 1969.

SSG Steve Cramer, current tenor vocalist, took a sabbatical from the Army Chorus in 1997 to pursue theater in New York. He was cast in the national tour of “Les Misérables” as a member of the ensemble and to cover the role of Jean Valjean. He performed on the tour for three years. In the fall of 2000, he was offered a role in the Broadway Company. He returned to The Army Chorus just prior to 9/11 and performed as a featured soloist at the Sept. 11, 2002, dedication of the repaired section of the Pentagon.

When not in uniform, many of the current Chorus members serve as music ministers in local churches, as pri-



## *Attend the 50th Anniversary Concert*

The U.S. Army Chorus celebrates its 50th anniversary with a concert on Saturday, Aug. 5, at Schlesinger Hall for the Performing Arts in Alexandria, Va.

Visit [www.usarmyband.com](http://www.usarmyband.com) for directions and more information.

vate vocal instructors, and as featured soloists, ensemble singers, and pianists in the very active arts community in and around Washington, D.C.

Just as the Army Chorus has been the duty assignment for many talented singers and pianists, the group has been led and supported by an impressive roster of directors and conductors.

CPT Samuel R. Loboda had a true patriotic spirit for men's choral literature and led the Army Band Chorus and the Army Chorus until he became COL Loboda, leader and commander of The U.S. Army Band in 1964, where he served until he retired in 1976.

Current director and conductor LTC John Clanton is enjoying his second tour of duty with the group. Officer in charge of the Chorus from 1995 to 2000, and from 2004 to the present, Clanton has performed and recorded with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus under Maestro Robert Shaw.


In addition to its numerous community concerts and school outreach programs each year, the U.S. Army Chorus has appeared in such notable concert halls as New York's Lincoln Center, Radio City Music Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Hollywood Bowl and the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. The National Symphony, Annapolis Symphony, Grant Park (Chicago) Symphony and San Francisco Symphony are just a few of the orchestras that have featured the Chorus as guest performers.

Periodically, the Army Chorus is invited to give special performances at regional and national choral conventions of organizations such as the

American Choral Directors Association, Music Educators National Convention, and Music and Intercollegiate Men's Choruses Inc., where the group has profoundly inspired and influenced developing singers and music educators, according to Army officials.

Holiday television specials, national network morning shows, and evening variety and talk shows have all hosted the Chorus, as have Major League Baseball, the National Football League, the National Basketball Association, the National Hockey League and NASCAR events. The men of The Army Chorus have been featured

performers on Army television specials and Internet broadcasts seen and heard by our military service members around the world.

Historic Fort Myer, adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., is the chorus' home. The chorus can be assembled quickly to provide music for ceremonies, special events and hosted dinners in the distinguished residences of the chairman of the joint chiefs, Army chief of staff and other top-ranking military officials. 








# CALEFEX





▶ Combat engineers with Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, prepare to enter and clear an “enemy” compound during a recent combined-arms live-fire exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C.

# ’06

Story and Photos by SPC Mike Pryor

**Y**OUR heart is racing. The earth is trembling under your feet from the artillery fire hitting the ground. You can’t see because of the dust and debris filling the air.

You can’t breathe because of the clouds of smoke filling your lungs. You can barely hear the man next to you shouting into your ear over the roar of gunfire and explosions.

This is combined-arms combat, and it’s a sensory overload.

Paratroopers from the 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment, learned to fight through the chaos and confusion of battle

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SPC Mike Pryor is with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office.





during their recent combined-arms live-fire exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C.

“It looks hectic, but it’s really not. You just have to tune everything out and do your job,” said SPC Keith Stevens, a radio-telephone operator with Company A, 1st Bn., 325th Inf.

Participation in a CALFEX allows Soldiers to practice synchronization among different elements in combat — in the most realistic environment possible, said 1LT Sean Gailey, battalion air-operations officer.

“How often do you have artillery, air support and infantry in the same fight?,” Gailey asked. “It’s great, because it builds confidence in all the different units by showing them the benefits of what one unit can do for the other.”

The mission during the CALFEX was to conduct a tactical movement to an objective, gain entry by breaching the security perimeter, assault and clear a building, and then defeat an enemy counterattack.

The exercise gave company commanders the opportunity to employ most of the different combined-arms assets that would be available to them in combat, including artillery support, mortars, antitank weapons and demolitions.

Each company in the battalion completed multiple iterations of the assault during a week. The exercise began with dry runs and blank-fire rehearsals, and culminated in separate day and night live-fire assaults.

“It was very realistic, with all the rounds flying around,” said PFC Chuck Garcia, a Co. A medic. “I asked my platoon sergeant how often people actually get shot on these things, and he said, ‘Don’t ask, or you’ll jinx it.’”

The dangers were real. With artillery fire being brought in as close as

▶ PFC Chuck Garcia, a medic with Company A, 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment, “treats” PFC Andrew Altizer, also of Co. A, for a simulated shoulder wound.



► SPC Aaron Nichols of Co. B, 1st Bn., 325th Inf. Regt., moves into position to engage “enemy” troops with his AT-4 after his company seized an important objective.

possible to the paratroopers on the ground, the risk of friendly-fire casualties was high. But fire-support specialists like PFC Phillip Settles helped the artillery batteries put accurate rounds on target.

“My job is to relay battlefield information. If information gets scrambled up, it could get ugly out there,” Settles said.

PFC Marc Phillips, another fire-support specialist with Co. A, said the CALFEX was a valuable exercise because it demonstrated the importance of fire support to the infantry.

“With enough time and firepower, the infantry can overcome any obstacle. They might have to take 10 casualties, but if the forward observer is doing his job, he can blow the obstacle up without the infantry even having to move,” said Phillips. 🚩

► Combat engineer PFC Mark Lambert gets ready to enter an “enemy” compound after breaching the walls with a shaped-charge explosive.





# Battle at Entry Control Point-5

Story by SSG Julie Nicolov

**O**F ALL the troops deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, six percent are reserve-component Soldiers. They are often called “week-end warriors” by active-duty Soldiers, many of whom believe that they train “soft,” don’t know as much about the Army as their active-duty counterparts and are rarely in harm’s way.

Two days in fall 2005 changed those misconceptions for active-duty Soldiers deployed to Camp Corregidor, in Ramadi, Iraq.

The post was under the jurisdiction of 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division.

Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers from Company A, 3rd Bn., 103rd Armored Regiment, joined Task Force 2-69 Armor in July 2005 and soon began guarding various observation posts throughout the city. They patrolled the streets and conducted house raids for suspected insurgents.

Two of the outposts they manned, Entry Control Point 5 and Battle Position 4 in the Sufia district, put the Guard Soldiers’ skills to the test.

“I thought my time was over,” said SSG Robert McDonald, a 3rd Platoon tanker, of the battle at BP 4 on Sept. 15, 2005.

SSG Julie Nicolov is assigned to the Multinational Corps, Iraq, Public Affairs Office.

McDonald and SPC Kristopher Trayer had just begun their watch when insurgents attacked.

“We were just getting comfortable when Trayer noticed people were dispersing and asked why,” McDonald said. “I stood up and looked out, and that’s when the bullets started flying. It just went to hell from there.”

McDonald said Trayer’s observation likely saved McDonald’s life.

“If he hadn’t seen what was coming, I would have been right there at the doorway,” McDonald said. “That’s where a sniper had me in his sights. He shot the soda can right above my head.”

Instead of firing a few rounds and running away, a platoon-sized element of insurgents attacked the Americans’ position.

“It was uncharacteristic, in that it was an actual sustained fight and not just a hit-and-run attack,” said CPT Kevin Kearney, Co. A’s commander.

The attack happened so quickly that McDonald and Trayer only had time to react.

“It’s amazing what goes through your mind when you’re in a life-or-death situation; you have no time to be afraid,” McDonald said. “The pre-deployment training we had kicked right in, and I’m thankful for that.”

When there was a lull in the fight,

McDonald’s first thoughts were of his family and what the battle might mean to them if he didn’t survive it, he said.

“As I was reloading my weapon, I thought about that day being my dad’s birthday,” McDonald said. “I thought he would never be able to celebrate his birthday again if I got killed.”

An Iraqi soldier saved McDonald’s life a second time.

“I found out that an Iraqi soldier shot a guy who had a rocket-propelled grenade, just as he was about to fire at the tower I was in,” McDonald said.

Two weeks later insurgents attacked ECP-5, which is in the same vicinity as BP-4. This time, the insurgents mustered a company-sized element of fighters.

Third platoon was again ready for them.


“I saw the cars start to leave. Then I saw the civilians running off,” said SSG Frank Jost, another 3rd Platoon tanker. “We locked and loaded, and waited.”

When civilians leave the streets, it’s often a sign of an impending attack by insurgents, Jost said.

To the National Guard unit’s credit, even the men who had just gotten off duty were ready for what happened next.

“I had just fallen asleep, and all of a sudden these blasts went off,” said



A photograph showing two soldiers in camouflage uniforms and helmets, equipped with rifles, patrolling through a chain-link fence. They are in a dusty, urban environment with concrete barriers. The soldier in the foreground is holding a rifle and looking towards the camera, while the second soldier is slightly behind him, also holding a rifle. The chain-link fence is in the foreground, creating a grid-like pattern over the scene.

Two Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers patrol Entry Control Point 5 in the Sufia district of Ramadi, Iraq.





1SG Lonnie Cobb



SSG Julie Nikolov

▲ A Bradley fighting vehicle guards a street in Ramadi. Soldiers of the Pennsylvania National Guard's Co. A, 3rd Bn., 103rd Armd. Regt., were attacked twice at this spot, but repelled both attacks.

◀ SSG Terry Witmoyer, a scout with Co. A's 2nd Platoon, monitors Route Michigan in Ramadi from the top of his M1 Abrams tank. Route Michigan is a main artery in the city, and has been the site of many insurgent attacks.

SGT Lee Hardin, a scout who had just gotten off his shift at ECP-5. "No one was manning the Mk. 19 grenade launcher, so I just moved it up and stayed on it for two hours."

Hardin was in such a hurry to help other Soldiers in his platoon that he had forgotten to put on his boots, and ran up to his post in his flip-flops.

"I don't think anyone noticed right away," Hardin said. "I put my boots on eventually."

Hardin, Jost and the other men at ECP-5 held their own for several hours.

When the battle was over, "we counted about 100 bullet holes in the tower," Jost said. Amazingly, none of the U.S. or coalition troops were killed

my back from the flying debris that resulted when the sniper hit the boards right by my head," Jost said. "Someone dug the bullet out of the wood and gave it to me."

The battles have changed Jost's perspective on life.

"Man, you always feel good to be alive," Jost said. "But after almost being killed, you appreciate life that much more."

Since October the insurgents have backed off in the Ramadi area where BP-4 and ECP-5 are located, said LTC Robert Roggeman, commander of 2nd Bn., 69th Armd. Regt.

In late October Roggeman moved his troops to a particularly dangerous stretch of road called Route Michigan.

and only two Americans were wounded.

"The only injury I had was splinters in


The number of improvised explosive devices that have detonated on Route Michigan since then has decreased by about half, he said.

"The insurgents will claim they threw us out of our former locations in Ramadi because of the armed conflict, but the numbers we have speak for themselves," said Roggeman, who estimates that 3rd Plt. Soldiers killed 100 insurgents in the two battles.

Since the Pennsylvania Guard relocated to Route Michigan, local militia members have taken on much of the security mission in the area where BP-4 and ECP-5 were located.

"I'm glad that the Iraqi people are stepping up," Hardin added. "I'm glad that they're trying to be stronger and more independent."

Meantime, Roggeman has great faith in the Guard Soldiers and their contribution to the security of Ramadi.

"They're phenomenal," he said, "and a great bunch of Soldiers." 



# Life *at* Camp Corregidor

Story and Photos by  
SSG Julie Nicolov

**A**S Japanese forces steadily advanced through the Philippines in the early days of World War II, American and Filipino troops fought back with all they had. And one name symbolizes that valiant struggle — Corregidor.

In early April 1942 the Japanese captured Bataan. For 27 days, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and their Filipino allies held out on Corregidor, an island fortress in Manila Bay. With 30 ounces of food and two rations of water per day per person, life on Corregidor was harsh, to say the least.

M1 Abrams tanks belonging to Co. A, 3rd Bn., 103rd Armd. Regt., stand ready at Camp Corregidor in Ramadi.



# A Corregidor



▲ Soldiers assigned to Camp Corregidor shop for snacks and other personal items at the traveling post exchange that visits the forward operating base for a few days every month.

Life at Camp Corregidor in Ramadi, Iraq, is a little better.

When the men of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's Company A, 3rd Battalion, 103rd Armored Regiment, 28th Infantry Division, moved onto the camp they found a post with plenty of dust, but no indoor plumbing, running water or hot meals.

"The bathroom on the first floor was a storage room, and the one on the second floor was infested with pigeons," said CPT Kevin Kearney, Co. A's commander.

The men took a quick inventory of their new home and put their civilian skills to good use.

"We got showers and latrines inside and helped other companies with their power," said 1SG Lonnie Cobb.

Before the desert's cold evenings set in, Co. A's Soldiers hooked up water heaters and opened a chow hall that provides three hot meals a day.

Life is still primitive. There's often no running water — the supply simply runs out — and Soldiers have to use baby wipes to clean up after midnight raids and three-day rotations at observation posts throughout the city.

Luxury is relevant, depending on where Soldiers are deployed. For those in Co. A, it can be found at the company headquarters building. It has Internet access, a phone café and a protected deck, where Soldiers can relax and talk.

A post exchange is open once a month. In the meantime, troops can buy items from a tiny shop set up by a local Iraqi.

Most bases throughout the country have had basic amenities for years. But hiring contractors to maintain latrines and do construction work around Corregidor is difficult, because of the area's proximity to the Sunni-dominated city of Ramadi. Insurgents often attack Iraqis who support the coalition.

"Once local workers migrate inside the city, where Camps Ramadi, Blue Diamond and Hurricane Point are located, no one really knows what they're doing or why," said MAJ Earl Higgins, operations officer for 2nd Bn., 69th Armd. Regt. "If the locals go anywhere near Corregidor — on the outskirts of town — the insurgents know they're working with the Americans."

Even without the amenities Soldiers have at larger bases in Iraq, Corregidor still has its good points.

"Sure, a lot of bases are nicer, but I like the people here," said SPC Jen Renninger, a medic from Co. C, 228th Forward Support Bn., who occasionally works at Corregidor.

The Soldiers help each other keep their chins up.

"Morale seems high. You have your usual nitpicky things, but we're a joking bunch," Cobb said.

**A**BOUT this time last year SSG Robert McDonald, a tanker with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's Company A, 3rd Battalion, 103rd Armored Regiment, was teaching 7th- and 8th-grade students at Tri-Valley High School in Millersburg, Pa.

Among the classes he taught was ancient Middle Eastern civilizations. This year he's experiencing those cultures first-hand — he's deployed to Camp Corregidor.

"I'm learning a lot about the ancient culture here, which we cover in my class," said McDonald. One of his former students is deployed to Camp Ramadi, on the other side of the city from Camp Corregidor, but she spent some time at Camp Corregidor as part of a team of female Soldiers tasked with searching Iraqi women at coalition checkpoints throughout the city.

When SPC Jen Renninger, a medic with the Pennsylvania Guard's Co.

They've gotten used to the things about Camp Corregidor that they can't change.

The mail is slow and the newspapers are often a week old, but boxes of toiletries and snacks are stacked to the ceiling outside the company's command office, reminding the Soldiers that even though they're away from home, family members and even complete strangers still support them.

"It's not so bad if you don't mind the dust, flies and mosquitoes," said SSG Frank Jost, a tanker with Co. A.

The Soldiers' time in Iraq, however, has affected how many will view life back in the States.

"I'm going to have an appreciation for not wearing flip flops in the shower, being able to flush a toilet, opening my own refrigerator in my own kitchen — that sort of stuff," Renninger said. 🇺🇸



# Reunion

C, 228th Forward Support Bn., sees her former teacher, “I tell him, ‘You’re Mr. McDonald, even though you’re SSG McDonald now.’”

Seeing her former teacher as a Soldier isn’t difficult to accept, said Renninger. She clearly remembers how he ran his classroom. “He was a disciplinarian.” Students didn’t just scrape by. They were always encouraged to do their best work.

Renninger’s 7th-grade history class was the first class McDonald taught. Before that, he was an infantryman with the 101st Airborne Division’s 187th Infantry Regiment. After serving on active duty, McDonald graduated from college and joined the Pennsylvania Guard.

“I figured I’d have a tough time getting a teaching job, so I went into the Guard,” McDonald said. “As soon as I joined in 1993, I was offered a job at Tri-Valley.”

The lessons McDonald taught in his history class have shed light on what Renninger sees in Iraq.



▲ SSG Robert McDonald, a tanker with Co. A, 3rd Bn., 103rd Armd. Regt., speaks with fellow Guard Soldier and former student SPC Jen Renninger, a medic in Co. C, 228th Fwd. Spt. Bn., during downtime at Camp Corregidor.

“He dealt a lot with the Muslim religion and the Middle East,” Renninger said. “We learned a lot about the Shiites versus the Sunnis, too.”

McDonald’s former service with the 101st Abn. Div. also influenced his students as they made plans for their futures.

“Students always ask me about the military as an option after high school,” McDonald said. “I don’t know if it’s because

of me that they’re here.”

Other former students of McDonald’s are also serving in Iraq. He hopes they use this challenging time to be thankful for every day they have.

This deployment has had a huge effect on Renninger’s future plans.

“I want to do everything. What’s there to limit you after being here?” Renninger said.

— SSG Julie Nicolov



▲ Camp Corregidor lies amid the ruins of Ramadi, in Iraq’s Al Anbar Province, the site of frequent battles between coalition troops and insurgents.





## Family Care Plans

**T**he growing number of Soldiers seeking legal help because of “Family Care Plan” (FCP) problems indicates a shortfall of training and understanding by both commanders and Soldiers of the requirements of Paragraph 5-5, AR 600-20.

The failure to understand and comply with the mandatory FCP requirements imposed on military personnel is resulting in the disruption of the lives of Soldiers and their family members, in Soldiers’ inability to perform their official duties, in adverse morale and, in some cases, in the termination of promising military careers. Further compounding the situation is the fact that many Reserve and National Guard Soldiers are being called to active duty without valid or functioning FCPs.

Although the Army assists Soldiers in many ways to provide for the care of their families, individual Soldiers must also be ready at all times to satisfactorily perform their military missions, maintain their readiness and be deployable. Performance of duty without interference includes temporary duty,

prolonged combat duty and routine unaccompanied tours.

The large number of both active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers who have family needs requires that Soldiers plan ahead for their absences and for the care of children or other family members left behind. For years, the personnel sections of commands and units have required Soldiers to execute DA Form 5305-R (Family Care Plan), which declares how individual Soldiers will provide for the care of their family members in the event of an absence.

The FCP is simply the Army’s proof that Soldiers have provided for periods of separation from their families, and is intended to ensure each Soldier’s deployability. The proof consists of the DA Form 5305-R, accompanied by a DA Form 5841-R (a power of attorney that appoints someone to care for the family member or members) and a DA Form 5840 (“Certificate of Acceptance as Guardian or Escort”).

The certificate of acceptance requires the person named as the guardian or escort in the FCP to actually appear before a notary public, prove their existence and agree to perform as the guardian or escort. All required documents are then filed with the personnel section of the Soldier’s unit. The need for the appointed persons to affirm their existence and their willingness to perform as guardian or escort resulted from cases in which the person named never existed or never agreed to perform the required duties, thereby causing the Soldier to be non-deployable.

It is the responsibility of each individual Soldier to initiate, file



Steven Chucala is chief of the Legal Assistance Division in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at Fort Belvoir, Va.



and ensure the currency of a valid and complete FCP. The plan may become necessary at enlistment, re-enlistment or at any time during the period of service. The required forms are to be reproduced locally, as indicated by the “R” following each form number.

FCPs apply to both officers and enlisted members. It is the unit commander’s responsibility to provide for family care counseling for all of the unit’s Soldiers. An FCP is to be completed when a Soldier:

a. Is pregnant and has no spouse, is divorced, is widowed, is separated or is residing without her spouse.

b. Is married to another member of an active or reserve component of any service.

c. Has joint or full legal custody of one or more family members under the age of 19, or has an adult family member (or members) incapable of self care regardless of age who has no spouse, is divorced, widowed, separated or is residing apart from his or her spouse.

d. Is divorced and has liberal or extended visitation rights by court decree which would allow family members to be solely in the Soldier’s care for more than 30 consecutive days.

e. Has a spouse who is incapable of self-care or is otherwise physically, mentally or emotionally disabled so as to require special care or assistance.

Specific timelines are required for the completion and approval of FCPs. For example, pregnant Soldiers should receive counseling as to their options as soon as possible and not later than 90 days before the expected date of birth. Officers and enlisted members alike must use DA Form 5304-R, with officers following AR 600-8-24 and enlisted members following AR 635-200. For Reservists and National Guard members, AR 135-91 applies. Thereafter, the DA Form 5305-R is to be completed not later than 45 days following the birth of the child.

Commanders may designate a representative to conduct FCP counseling using the DA Form 5304-R, and to initial and



sign the counseling form on the commander’s behalf. Commanders may authorize 30 additional days for active-duty members to complete the forms, and 60 additional days for reserve-component members.

Commanders must ensure that all required documents are in order and that the FCP appears to be workable. AR 600-20 requires that commanders “must test the validity and durability of the Family Care Plan to include contacting the designated guardian(s) prior to final approval or recertification.” Should the commander disapprove the plan, the Soldier is entitled to 30 days from the date of disapproval to submit additional documentation to support the FCP.

Commanders also have several other options, including that of authorizing a deployed Soldier to take leave (pursuant to AR 600-8-10) to return home when circumstances are beyond the Soldier’s control. If a Soldier files a false FCP, the commander may take disciplinary action, bar the Soldier’s re-enlistment or initiate the Soldier’s involuntary separation.

Timely and correct actions by Soldiers and commanders will eliminate much of the chaos experienced when FCPs are not in place and Soldiers claim they cannot deploy, perform TDY or make a permanent change-of-station move.



*Know the Law!*



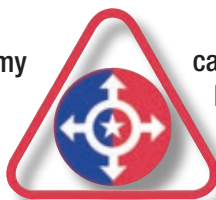
### ARMY TO TRANSFORM IRR

"INDIVIDUAL Warriors" will be the new label for Soldiers serving in the Individual Ready Reserve.

The Army believes the new name will lead to a cultural shift away from the unstructured group of inactive individuals into a cohesive group of Soldiers who are trained, aware and ready to augment Army missions when called upon.

There are currently more than 100,000 enlisted Soldiers and officers in the IRR, representing more than 200 military occupational skills ranging from combat arms to combat-service support specialties. That number could potentially be reduced to 60,000 ready and available Soldiers.

The Army will institute an annual screening and training program for all assigned IWs who align with what the Army



calls its new Force-Generation model. This program will be developed and carried out by the Army to maintain contact with IWs and ensure they receive training when needed to be ready to deploy, and in order to maintain positive contact, administer refresher training as individual skills degrade and ensure each Soldier's deployable readiness.

Recruiters and career counselors will brief all recruits entering the service and transitioning between components so they understand service obligations and training requirements in the Army Reserve. — *Army News Service*



### ARMY ESTABLISHES MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Motorcycles can be a great form of transportation and entertainment, but they can also be deadly weapons if used incorrectly. In fiscal year 2005 the Army lost 45 Soldiers in motorcycle-related accidents, and so far in FY 2006 the number is even higher.

To help reduce the toll, the Army has established the Motorcycle Mentorship Program, managed by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center. Visit the program's Web site — at <https://crc.army.mil/mmp/index.asp> — for safety tips, best practices, sponsors, success stories and other valuable information. And remember:

## Ride Safe!!



## Register to Vote!

*for the Fall Elections*

### ARMY TO SEPARATE NO-SHOW RC SOLDIERS

THE Army recently announced a decision to realign reserve-component-unit Soldiers who have not been participating in required training.

Under this initiative, Soldiers will be encouraged to resume training with their Troop Program Units or be considered for administrative separation.

Abbreviating the notification procedures for separation will be phased in regionally over a year. The expected result will be fewer non-participants on unit rosters, providing a more accurate picture of unit readiness. At the same time, other Soldiers can be recruited or promoted into the resulting vacancies.

Soldiers who are separated will, if appropriate, be required to reimburse the government for any unearned portions of incentives they have received. — *ARNEWS*



## ARMY ADOPTS NEW BLUE UNIFORM

"We have all of these variations of uniforms – green, blue and white," said Army Chief of Staff GEN Peter J. Schoomaker. "It makes sense for us to go to one traditional uniform that is really sharp and high quality, and which Soldiers will be very proud to wear. And that's what we've done by adopting this blue Army Service Uniform that reflects simplicity, quality, utility and tradition."

Many Soldiers already own an Army blue uniform (now to be called the Army Service Uniform) and may continue to wear it. Introduction in the Army military clothing sales stores should begin in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2007. Introduction in the Clothing Bag should begin in the first quarter of FY 2009. The Mandatory Possession Date is expected to be the fourth quarter of FY 2011.

A wear-out date for the Army Green Class A and White dress uniforms will be determined at a later date.



Information about the blue Army Service Uniform and its composition is available at [www.army.mil/symbols/uniforms](http://www.army.mil/symbols/uniforms).



## 2006 SOLDIERS SHOW RETURNS TO CONUS

THE U.S. Army Soldiers Show is one of more than 200 morale, welfare and recreation programs the Army provides Soldiers and families worldwide through the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center in Alexandria, Va. Here is the July and August schedule of performances. The schedule is subject to change.

— Army Community and Family Support Center



### July and August Schedule

July 4-5	Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.
July 7	Red River Army Depot, Texas
July 11-12	Redstone Arsenal, Ala.
July 14-16	Fort Rucker, Ala.
July 18-19	Fort Stewart, Ga.
July 22-23	Fort Jackson, S.C.
July 26-27	Fort Lee, Va.
July 28-31	Fort Gordon, Ga.
Aug. 2	Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.
Aug. 5-6	Fort Benning, Ga.
Aug. 11-12	Fort Knox, Ky.
Aug. 14	Louisville, Ky.
Aug. 17-19	Fort Campbell, Ky.
Aug. 23-24	Fort Polk, La.
Aug. 26-27	Fort Hood, Texas
Aug. 30	Fort Sam Houston, Texas



## Chester

**H**E may have been the oldest participant in the 20th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sport Clinic in Snowmass, Colo., but 86-year-old **Chester Golembiewski** wasn't going to let a mountain of snow get in his way.

The annual clinic, sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Disabled American Veterans, offers blind, paralyzed and other severely injured veterans an opportunity to participate in a unique rehabilitation experience, clinic officials said.

The recent event was Golembiewski's third.

"I wasn't able to attend last year because I had a stent placed in my heart, but I wasn't going to miss it this year. I can't do too much out here except for ski and snowshoe, but I enjoy getting to the top of the mountain and skiing down," he said. "I was 83 the first time I tried this."

"Because I can't see too well anymore, two guides skied down the slope with me," Golembiewski said. "We go pretty slowly, but that's okay. I'm glad they're there, because who knows what would happen if I tried to do this by myself."

Golembiewski tries to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

"Some days I feel like a 60-year-old in an 86-year-old body. Since I don't see so well anymore I don't watch much television, so I get outside as much as I can," he said. "I can't drive anymore, so I walk everywhere. I try to take about 10 short trips out to the grocery store or shopping center every day, and I play golf once a week."

The highlight for Golembiewski was winning the Inspirational Trophy during the 2005 Golden Age Games held in Oklahoma. He's been attending the games for the past 30 years.

"I try to get to the games every year, and last year they gave the trophy to me and I was pretty shocked. It's in honor of a bicyclist who died after he finished a marathon. It's a pretty

*"I try to do as much as I can for others as well. It's important to stay active and keep looking forward."*



big honor for me. I also won a bronze medal in golf and placed in bowling and shuffleboard. I won seven medals altogether. I wish I could participate in all the events at both clinics, but it's not possible, so I pick the ones I can do and enjoy them."

Golembiewski served in the Army from 1941 to 1945 throughout the Pacific, and in New Guinea and Australia. "I talk with some of the other veterans when I'm at these events, but we don't dwell on our military service. We mostly talk about what we're going to be doing, not what we've done," he said.

During the week-long recreational-therapy clinic more than 400 other severely disabled veterans — from World War II to operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom — joined Golembiewski on the slopes to challenge themselves both physically and emotionally.

"I try to do as much as I can for others as well. It's important to stay active and keep looking forward," Golembiewski said. 



# WARRIOR ETHOS



**I will never leave  
a fallen comrade**

The Warrior Ethos is the common thread that has tied us all together throughout 230 years of service to our nation. Since 1775, American Soldiers have answered the call to duty. From Valley Forge to the battlefields of Gettysburg; from the Argonne Forest to the shores of Normandy; from the rice paddies of Korea and Vietnam to the mountains of Afghanistan and the streets of Baghdad; our military history is rich with the willingness of generation after generation to live by the Warrior Ethos.

Peter J. Schoomaker  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff



A woman with curly hair, wearing a red and black motorcycle suit, is sitting on a motorcycle at night. She is looking up and to the left. The background is dark with some blurred lights.

**ANNA GURRERA**

**JOINED THE ACTIVE ARMY**  
QUALIFIED FOX NBC RECONNAISSANCE SYSTEM VEHICLE OPERATOR IN KOREA.

**JOINED THE ARMY RESERVE**  
WON FIRST U.S. ARMY SOLDIER  
OF THE YEAR AWARD.

**BECAME A CIVILIAN**  
MOTORCYCLE ENTHUSIAST AND  
MEDICAL STUDENT.

**WE'LL KEEP YOU MARCHING FORWARD.**

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**ARMY RESERVE**

Like her father before her, Anna Gurrera knew she wanted to be a Soldier. And though she followed in his footsteps, she created a path all her own. Using the personal courage, dedication and unshakable confidence she's developed in the Army, SGT Gurrera is on her way to becoming a physician in the civilian world. By joining the Army Reserve, you'll also keep moving ahead. While continuing to serve your country, you'll get a bonus, extra paycheck and the chance to train near home. Learn more about SGT Anna Gurrera and how you can build a future filled with possibilities. Visit [goarmyreserve.com/anna](http://goarmyreserve.com/anna) or call 800-USA-ARMY.

